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Shirley - this is for your eyes and Jack's only. Maury can tell you what it is about, if he hasn't. Best. HW

20734

October 12, 1966

Mr. Bob Menefee
WCAU
Phila., Pa.

Dear Mr. Menefee,

Returning from New York last Friday night I was listening to your program and was, as I have been with the discussion programs on WCAU, impressed by the responsibility and reasonableness with which you conducted your show and yourself. Then you went into an area for which you were ill prepared, the Warren Report, and probably without so intending gave a remarkable demonstration of how a three-dollar bill has achieved such currency.

There is not a single thing you said that I have not often heard, that the American people have not been led to believe by a very aggressive and successful campaign of public misinformation, or, sadly, that was true. I think it is a safe assumption that you are better informed than most people and are better equipped to resist brainwashing than the overwhelming majority of our people. How, then, could you with such sincerity and without any question in your mind whatsoever be as totally in error as you were? I think I know.

I made several stops on the turnpikes but was unable to get through until after your show was off. When I then got through Maury could not reach you. I presume he has extended my challenge to you. I intend it not to demean or humiliate you, nor is it my purpose to embarrass you. I think it puts you in a position to make a rare demonstration of personal integrity, to make a dramatic presentation of how the country has been so radically misled, and to undo the damage you have done. By damage what you may have cost me is least of what is in my mind. I believe Jack McKinney will tell you I have resisted devices that would immeasureably benefit the sale of my book. Unlike those that followed it, publishers feared it and it is a private printing for which I went into debt and from which there has been no profit (I have just finished paying for the second printing, the day I ordered the fourth, and have taken from the gross income not a single cent). But it is my hope and I try and make it the intent of my appearances that the ultimate truth come out. I am supported by no advertising, have no public-relations assistance, and there is no one behind me but my wife and those fine people who have read WHITEWASH and want to help.

What I think would make a really exciting program would be the repetition of each of the things you said, one at a time, with me given a chance to answer, in every case from the official record and nothing else, and with you calling me to task if you think my answer is evasive, not responsive, or in any other way deficient. We could do this entirely by phone, in advance, and you could use the tape. Or we can do it live some time I'm going to or coming from New York, or if I have occasion to be in or near Phila. (my finances are such I cannot now offer to make a special trip). I sincerely believe that when you have done this you will be able to tell your listeners this is a sample of how the country was misinformed about the President's assassination and its subsequent investigation. I recommend taping not only as a sign of my good faith,

for it gives you the opportunity to edit what I say or even to kill the entire thing, but it also takes some of the pressure off of me. For example, should you say "Show me!" I could put the phone down and get the exact page reference for you from whatever official volume I'd cite. It is also the means of a possible hight off for you, if that is a temptation.

You do not know me, but there are by now many who do and who are available to you. This includes Shirley Lekach, one of Jack's producers, who can tell you that I strongly urged them to air one of my competitors who has a publishing house and an advertising budget behind him. Jack will also tell you that I declined his unexpected invitation to share this man's time when Jack invited me, on the ground that it was unfair to him, and that when Jack persisted, I agree only if the guest insisted upon it. Shirley may remember that prior to this I offered to tape a commendatory introduction to my competitor.

It is not that I am unwordly, or better than another, or anything like that. It is just that this is a unique subject, one of special importance to our country, and should be aired with only the greatest responsibility of which man is capable. While I have never doscissed the subject with him, I venture to suggest that Jack will tell you that no one I have mentioned has made a single complaint of inaccuracy on my part. He can also tell you that I have leaned over backwards to be fair to those with whom I disagree and with those I criticize.

This is possibly the kind of challenge you have never had before. On this subject I have met unusual tests, including confrontations of my book with former Commission staff members when I was not present to defend it. No error was alleged.

If you are half the man I think you are from those few of your programs I have heard, I think you will accept it. I would also like you to bear in mind the possible responsibility you bear for spreading uncorrected misinformation, for in addition to your deservedly large Philadelphia audience, I know from my mail that your station has a tremenduous audience all over the eastern half of the continent, not just the country. From a single appearance on Jack's show I got possibly a hundred letters from below Florida to so far above Montreal that the correspondent said there was no store within 400 miles, from west of the Mississippi both northxand south. It is also a very large audience. For example, quite unexpectedly and entirely without announcement - in fact, the mc was still asking me if I'd appear when we were aired- I spent an hour by phone on the CBS Dayton, Ohio affiliate last week. Half of this was phone calls. A remarkably large percentage of those who phoned in questions, seven in about 45 minutes, had heard me on WCAU at least once because they referred to it. With this kind of an audience and with so vast an opportunity for spreading misinformation, even with the best intentions in the world, I hope you will seriously consider the opportunity I offer for correcting it.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg

P.S. Inherent in the whole thing is something I am also confident is unintended, a slur on your colleague, and that, too, should be rectified.